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An alternative in community education : a study of participant controlled projects in rural New Hampshire.

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AN ALTERNATIVE IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION:
A STUDY OF PARTICIPANT CONTROLLED PROJECTS
IN RURAL NEW HAMPSHIRE

A Dissertation Presented

By

Arthur Shumway Ellison

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

September 1978

School of Education

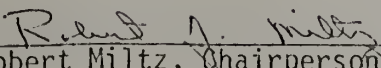
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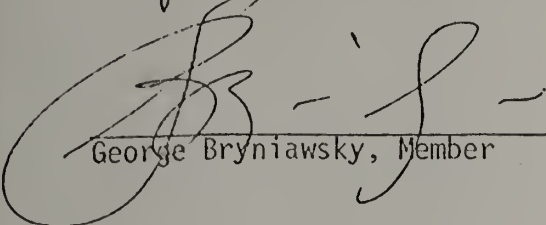
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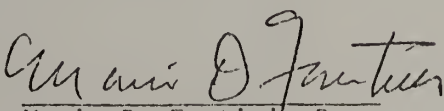
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The topic chosen for this study reflects a commitment on the part of the investigator to efforts that will allow people to gain more control over the environment in which they live. It is the belief of the investigator that those with influence within the economic and political systems in the United States do not value the meaningful participation of all people, in fact the people who reap the rewards of the systems are content with the exclusion from the processes of vast numbers of citizens.

My experience over the past sixteen years in a variety of economic development, educational and political roles has contributed to this belief. Involvement in education as a teacher and administrator, in governmental attempts to reduce poverty through Community Action and Model City agencies and in politics as a field organizer for a presidential candidate, have served to increase my frustration with the imbalance of resources existing in our society.

This study of the Community Learning Center Projects in New Hampshire was undertaken from this perspective. It represents for the investigator the exploration of yet another approach to redressing some of the inequalities of our society.

I would like to acknowledge some of the people who have been instrumental in my work during the years that I was a student at the University of Massachusetts.

Bob Miltz, for his willingness to accept major responsibility for the guidance of this study.

John Stoffolano, for his insistence that clarity is directly related to the brevity of one's writing.

George Bryniawsky, for his assistance, guidance and friendship throughout my years at the University of Massachusetts.

Robby Fried, for his commitment to the concept that people are capable of solving their own problems and his willingness to put that philosophy into practice.

Dwight Allen, for his constant support and encouragement, without which my experience at the University of Massachusetts would not have been possible.

Harvey Scribner, for his continual asking, "yes, but does it help students?"

Fred Harris, for his belief that people are smart enough to govern themselves and his attempts to address that theme during his presidential campaign from 1974-76. Participation in that effort provided a test of the author's commitment to social change through the political process.

ABSTRACT

An Alternative in Community Education: A Study of Participant Controlled Projects in Rural New Hampshire

September, 1978

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Directed by: Professor Robert Miltz

There are two problems addressed by this study: (1) the lack of relevant research and information concerning the Community Learning Center Project, a new alternative in the field of community education, and (2) the lack of consideration of the potential of these projects for use by low income people.

Much of the study of community education in the United States has revolved around the traditional community school approach. Little attention has been paid to other efforts in the field, particularly those that have developed from different philosophical bases and seek to address goals that are not part of the traditional community education perspective.

Five of the most successful Community Learning Center Projects were selected for study. Forty of the core group participants in the five projects were interviewed by the investigator using a questionnaire constructed to elicit information related to the four major hypotheses posed for the study: (1) that all five groups would show a high level of participant control, (2) that all five groups would

address a wide variety of issues within the community, (3) that all five groups would include a wide variety of people within their core group, and (4) that all five groups would show a high level of positive impact upon the self-image of participating core group members.

The data was also used to consider the Community Learning Center projects in light of successful self-help efforts by low-income people in the field of community organization.

Data from the questionnaires and interviews with the forty core group participants substantiated Hypotheses I and IV. Each group showed a high level of participant control and a high level of positive impact upon the self-image of participating core group members. Hypotheses II and III were not substantiated.

The study concludes that the philosophy and practice of the Community Learning Center Projects represent a major new thrust in the field of community education. Pointing to the emphasis upon participant control of the community education process, the study further concludes that the potential exists for the use of the Community Learning Center philosophy by groups of low income people.

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CHAPTER I

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

Some public school systems in the United States have begun to accept responsibility for educational efforts that extend beyond the traditional school day and traditional school population. Most of the efforts in this regard have been classified under the term "adult education." In most recent years, a further expansion of those activities has resulted in the rise to prominence of the community school and the concept of community education.

As defined by two leaders in the field (Minzey and LeTarte, 1972), "community education is a philosophical concept which serves the entire community by providing for all the educational needs of its community members." (p. 19) Community education has evolved as a series of activities and classes that seek to provide children and adults with academic skills, recreational and socialization opportunities. Using the community school as a base, the traditional concept of community education emphasizes the delivery of services to all parts of the community.

Within the past three years, there have been scattered attempts to shift the focus of community education from the delivery of services to a process that emphasizes the needs, concerns, and abilities of the members of the community. While limited in number, these new efforts have begun to have an impact upon the field of community education. The focus of this study is one of the major new efforts in the field

of community education: the Community Learning Center Projects carried out in rural New Hampshire.

A number of major changes take place when the basic philosophy of the program is participant oriented. The leader of the community education efforts is usually designated as a "facilitator." The facilitator, in many cases from outside the community, helps the community to identify and act upon its needs. By contrast, the traditional system mandates the need for professionals to develop programs which they feel are relevant to the needs of the community.

The resulting activities of the two concepts are striking. The participant centered approach results in groups of people working out solutions to problems which they have identified in their community. The more traditional approach consists of classes and activities in a community school which are initiated and directed by professionals.

The nature of the activity is also directly related to the process that is utilized. The preponderance of efforts in traditional programs are limited to the more peripheral concerns of the community, predominantly recreational activities, but also traditional educational and socialization programs. The participant oriented models have the potential for dealing with problems, expectations and concerns that are more central to the existence of community members.

In regard to the philosophy of the two approaches, one's perception of people is instrumental. Those who favor the participant approach are close to Saul Alinsky's belief (Alinsky, 1946) that "democracy as a way of life has been intellectually accepted but

emotionally rejected. The democratic way of life is predicated upon faith in the masses of mankind; yet few of the leaders really possess faith in the people." (p. 43) The philosophy of the community school centered approach includes within its parameters an acknowledgement of the capabilities of its participants, but the emphasis of the problem solving methodology lies with agencies rather than the individuals of the community.

A consideration of the differences in both philosophy and program must deal with the following basic questions: who will define problems in society? who will formulate the solutions to these problems? and who will take the actions necessary to apply the solutions?

The implicit assumption of this study was that people have access to the tools needed to solve most of their problems. In many cases the individuals who are facing personal and community problems have the abilities to solve them. The role of community education should be to help people develop a process that can be used to identify, develop and utilize these abilities. This study is an examination of one of these processes.

Statement of the Problem

The problem to be addressed is the lack of meaningful information regarding the effectiveness of the Community Learning Center Projects in the field of community education. The process is currently being utilized in a number of small towns in rural New Hampshire.

A variety of factors are responsible for the absence of substan-

tial research on the CLC Projects. Foremost is the fact that all of the individual projects utilizing the new process had been in existence for less than four years. This short time period has made it difficult to plan, organize and operate the individual projects, much less successfully evaluate the process on which they are based.

Also operating against the existence of meaningful information concerning the projects has been the relatively small scale upon which the projects had operated. With a small budget and staff, the major effort had been oriented toward the successful functioning of the projects rather than validating the results.

A further problem associated with the collection of data and drawing of conclusions was the identification of factors that are deemed to be integral measures of a project's level of success. The lack of agreement upon valid indicators of effective programs in the field of community education is a reflection of the wide divergence in practice and philosophy in the field as a whole.

Definition of Terms

Community education process--the methods by which community education goals are set, decisions are made, priorities are developed and activities are carried out in a community.

Community education program--the specific activities that are the outcomes of a community education process.

Traditional community education programs--programs that are usually offered in school buildings, designated community schools,

staffed by certified teachers, and administrators. The vast majority of activities sponsored by these programs fall into the areas of recreation, arts and crafts. Participant input into the program is usually through a representative council.

Participant controlled community education programs--recent programmatic efforts in the field of community education that give complete control of the program to the participants. There is usually a sharing of skills by all participants and a decision making process for the program that includes everyone who wishes to participate.

Community school director--the administrative leader of a community school program. In many cases the person is an assistant principal of the school whose working hours include afternoons, evenings and weekends.

Community Learning Center Projects--a process and program of community education introduced in several rural towns in New Hampshire in the mid-1970's. Emphasis is placed upon the participants controlling the initiation and maintenance of the program.

Community Learning Center core group--the informal decision making body of the Community Learning Center Projects. Participation in the group is open to all persons in a community.

Core group facilitator--the person who is initially responsible for bringing together people within a community to discuss the possibility of creating a Community Learning Center Project. His role is one of support for a process that encourages community members to formulate and carry out programs that meet their needs.

Design of the Study

The study focuses upon four key elements of a community education process originated by the Community Learning Center Project of the School of Continuing Studies, University of New Hampshire. Participant control, involvement in the process by a variety of people, the variety of activities implemented and the effect of the process upon the self-image of individual participants, were the areas around which the study centered.

Since its inception, the Community Learning Center Project has established learning groups in seven towns in rural New Hampshire. Five of the seven projects were used for this study and were selected by the Director of Community Education for the New Hampshire Department of Education, the former Coordinator of the Community Learning Center Project. His selection of projects was based upon the extent to which the seven projects had met their objectives. The five basic objectives for all projects were: (1) to develop community based learning centers to serve the postsecondary educational needs of residents, (2) to build upon the strengths and skills that adult learners have developed through their experience of living, (3) to develop the concept of the community itself as a learning environment, (4) to develop the capacity among adult learners to organize and govern their learning center to evolve into a cooperative facility, (5) to increase the capacity of adult learners to make use of higher education facilities throughout the state. The five projects that had been the most successful in reaching

their goals were selected for the study.

After the five communities had been identified, the investigator planned to interview at least eight members of the core planning group for each town. Since most of the group had an active membership of at least ten participants, the selection of eight provided a sample of sufficient size for the study. Only in the town of Bristol where the core group size was very small, did the plan to interview eight participants become unrealistic.

The persons interviewed for the study were chosen from among those participants who were currently active or had been active in the core group within the past twelve months. The State Director of Community Education selected the eight persons who he felt were the most active of the core group membership. Active membership in the group was defined as an individual's presence at fifty percent or more of the meetings of the core group held within the past twelve months.

A total of forty persons constituted the sample selected for interviewing by the investigator. All interviews with core group participants were conducted by the investigator in a one-to-one setting. All of the interviews took place within a two-month period.

The questions used in the study were designed by the investigator. Questions dealing with the openness of the process to all groups in the community focused upon the efforts of core group members to include a wide range of groups and individuals in the process. Additional questions on this topic examined the relationship between the composition

of the core group and the activities ultimately chosen for sponsorship.

The section of the study focusing upon the variety of activities actually implemented by the core group concentrated upon the perceptions of the potential of the group to move into new areas of community involvement.

Questions addressing the degree of control that the participants had over the process were structured to gain insight into the individual's actual participation in the process and his perception of the extent of his involvement.

The fourth part of the study focused upon the effect of the process upon the self-image of the participants. The investigator was concerned not only with their view of the effect of participation as it related to community education activities, but also how the specific skills learned through the Community Learning Center process were used in other parts of their lives.

The format for the questions required a "yes" or "no" response regarding various facets of the four issues under study (see Appendix II). In some cases there was a follow-up question asking for further elaboration, i.e., "Why or why not," "If (yes), (no), in what ways?." There were a limited number of questions in each of the four sections of the study which called for a longer, more general response than the answers to the questions noted above. Questions utilizing the Likert type scale were also designed to examine a range of responses from the participants.

The four areas chosen for study were those that the investigator felt were at the central core of any successful community education

process. It is understood that any of the key areas could be the subject of further intensive study, but in order to provide conclusions concerning the process that are significant to practitioners in the field, a combination of factors served as the basis for the study. The investigator chose the four areas discussed above as the most important to be evaluated.

Clearly the design of the study was of utmost importance as it relates to the final and most important part of the entire effort: the drawing of conclusions that can be presented in a practical format. Those involved in the field of community education need information concerning new efforts that will be of assistance to them in modifying ongoing philosophies and programs and creating new programs. This study is designed to fulfill that need.

Limitations of the Study

This dissertation is meant to be an indepth study of certain aspects of the Community Learning Center Projects. It focuses upon the actual process used by persons working on community problem solving. Major areas of the study included the impact of the process upon individuals and the degree of control that the participants had over the process. While some attention was paid to other aspects of the operation of the projects, i.e., administrative structure, budgets, etc. the study was not intended to be a complete analysis of those portions of the program.

It does not provide a comprehensive comparative study of major

community education philosophies or practices. Some attention was given to other efforts in the field, but this study is mainly concerned with providing relevant conclusions regarding the Community Learning Center Projects. The section of the dissertation regarding Suggestions for Additional Research includes comments in this area.

It is hoped that some parts of the study and the conclusions are useful to those in a variety of geographic areas, yet it must be kept in mind that the process studied was used in small rural towns in New Hampshire. The dynamics of larger communities in other areas of the country or world may not allow for the use of the process under study. Again the section on Suggestions for Additional Research will address this subject.

Organization of the Dissertation

The basic organization of the study was designed to provide both the novice and expert in community education with a sequential approach to the need for the study, the mechanics of gathering and analyzing data and the final results of the study. For those who would like to consider only a specific portion of the study, the organization allows them to utilize only those sections which are of interest.

Chapter One. In the general introduction, the author attempted to provide the philosophical background within which the study is set. This is pertinent not only to the field of community education, but it has ramifications and linkages to many other areas of human development, i.e., community organization, community development, and the dynamics

of income differences between various segments of our society.

Chapter Two. The review of literature examines those areas of research and concern that the author feels have some historical relation to the current philosophy and practice of community education. Here, again, the concern is not only for those who have been active in the areas of philosophy and practice of community education, but for those persons who have been active in other efforts to enable people to gain control of their futures. This chapter ties the study of five small New Hampshire community education projects to the larger movement of human improvement for and by those who have traditionally not been a part of such efforts.

Chapter Three. Based upon the premise that the participants of any movement are the best judges of its impact upon their goals, desires and needs, the data collection portion of the study was structured to obtain first hand information from the persons at the center of the entire effort in each community: the core group. In order to achieve the proper depth of information, the study was set up to deal with a high percentage of the core group participants in each town.

Chapter Four and Chapter Five. Both the sections on the analysis of data and conclusions of the study judge the effectiveness of the five projects within the context of goals that have been set by the participants and the hypotheses posed by the investigator. In addition, the results of the study integrate the entire community learning center effort into the broader context of participant controlled human development efforts.

C H A P T E R I I

REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE AND RELATED RESEARCH

This chapter examines the theoretical base of the Community Learning Center Projects in the four key elements that are the focus of the study: participant control, range of the issues addressed, variety of individuals involved in the process and the effect of the process upon the self-image of the participants. The chapter is also concerned with the future of the project because, as the originator of the project has written (Fried, 1975), "the outer limits of the potential have not been approached." (p. 141)

The related literature is drawn not only from the field of community education, but also from the community organization field, because it is in this area that one finds a philosophical position similar to that of the Community Learning Center Project. Both fields have a variety of viewpoints, not all of which are consistent in their philosophies or programmatic framework.

History of the Community Learning Center Project

The Community Learning Center Project in New Hampshire became operational in June, 1973 with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Sponsored by the School of Continuing Studies of the University of New Hampshire, the project was the creation of Robbie Fried who became the Project Coordinator.

Its intended purpose, as stated by the School of Continuing Studies, University of New Hampshire (1975), was to "assist groups of adults in several small communities in New Hampshire to define and develop a program of learning opportunities for the people of their towns." (p. 1) This goal of the project (School of Continuing Studies, University of New Hampshire, 1975) was implemented through the creation of core groups, eight to fourteen people from each town who

are interested in learning from others and/or sharing their own skills and interests with fellow townspeople, the core group decides what the CLC project is to be within their town: what the project will be called, who will do the organizing, what activities will be offered to the town, when and where they will take place, who will teach, how they will be advertised and so forth.
(p. 2)

A standard process was used by the facilitator to initiate core groups in each community. The facilitator contacted people in a community who he felt might be interested in discussing the Community Learning Center concept. Usually the initial contacts were made with librarians, local government officials, religious leaders, and leaders of the towns' service and social clubs. Their names were obtained by the facilitator from people in the town with whom the facilitator or friends of the facilitator had had prior contact.

One of the people in the initial contact group was asked to host a meeting in their home for the purpose of listening to the facilitator discuss the Community Learning Center concept and the possibility of implementation of a program in that community. If no one would host

the meeting then the facilitator would arrange the first meeting in a local church or decide that there was not sufficient interest to warrant even an initial get together.

If the initial meeting was held, participants were encouraged to share their educational goals and needs as well as those of the community as a whole. During the initial presentation by the facilitator the following points were emphasized: (1) the Community Learning Center Project would be the creation of the group in the community rather than the facilitator or the university for which he worked, (2) there were within the community a substantial number of persons with skills that could be shared with other people and a number of people who would like to gain these skills, and (3) the facilitator would work with the group in assisting the development of the project for as long as the group felt it was necessary, however, his role would be one of helping them address the needs of their community as they perceived them rather than imposing a set community learning center project on them.

In those communities where the project was successful, people returned to a second meeting with the facilitator having completed two tasks in the interim: (1) identifying people within the community who had skills to share, and (2) to bring to the meeting other interested people from the community.

From this point on the facilitator worked with what now had become the core group. In most cases, the frequency of contact between the core group and facilitator remained high for at least six months.

After one year of successful operation, there was a significant decrease in the number of contacts between the facilitator and the core group. The group was then operating with little if any assistance from the facilitator.

From 1973 to 1975 the project investigated the possibilities of establishing core groups in as many as thirteen New Hampshire communities. By April, 1975 core groups were functioning successfully in five communities. During this period the project was funded by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education.

In September, 1976, Dr. Fried became the Director of the New Hampshire Department of Education's new Office of Community Education. Since that time, this office has maintained contact with the ongoing groups and has used the philosophy behind the CLC Project as the basis for community education throughout the State.

Most of the actions of the learning groups within a given town have been characterized by non-credit courses and activities, a great number of non-certified teachers, a continued search for activities that are of interest to townspeople and a desire on the part of the core group participants for both personal and community improvements.

The core groups have remained as the central organizing element of the project. In those communities where the project was continued, core group membership has grown or at least remained constant over the two and one-half to three and one-half years of the project.

Community Organization and Community
Education Literature

Participant control. If there is one aspect that stands out in the Community Learning Center Project, it is the implementation of the philosophy that local individuals must be able to control the processes of educational and community change.

Spokespersons for the community school approach do not accept the language or philosophy of those who see the need for individuals and groups without power to go through a process of empowerment that emphasizes the skills and resources within the potential of the affected. Rather, they feel that the problems of powerless persons stem from a misuse of resources and that to solve the problems one needs only to arrange for a match of existing resources with those persons who have the appropriate need.

The best example of this view comes from Fred Trotten (1970) one of the major proponents of the community school approach to community education. He writes,

As it, the community school, is probably the agent of greatest neutrality with respect to all the people it is in a position of leadership and should stimulate and coordinate the educational contributions of other agents. The school is the only element of the community that is commonly owned by the people. (p. 3)

If one accepts the view that "every model of practice carries some view of the community which guides the practitioner, although it is often implied and not well understood by those who use "it," (p. 13) it is essential to search for the underlying view of community in any

project. The originator of the Community Learning Center Project (Fried, 1975) sees the power of individual participants as central to the functioning of the projects. He states:

There are certainly many situations in rural New Hampshire aside from those involving human services and education about which I have already commented, that call for liberation. Here as elsewhere in America people living within the same town or neighborhood experience vastly different levels of power and powerlessness, and such gross inequality of power as it does everywhere plays itself out in exploitation and human suffering. (p. 139-140)

This view is much closer to that of Saul Alinsky and Paulo Freire than to the position articulated by the leaders of the community education movement in the United States today.

Freire's view of cultural action for freedom that allows those who are powerless in society to liberate themselves, is not altogether different from Alinsky's (Sanders, 1970) that, "the most important lesson is that people don't get opportunity or dignity as a gift or an act of charity. They only get these things in the act of taking them through their own efforts." (p. 59) Both persons perceive communities as stratified social systems that have basic divisions between those who have money and power and those who do not.

Perhaps the most succinct statement of this division in society comes from a participant in the 1976 United States Presidential Race, former Oklahoma Senator, Fred Harris (speech, 1976), who stated, "Too few people have most of the money and power and everyone else has very little of either."

The field of community education has contrasting assumptions

about the degree of community control that is acceptable (Minzey and LeTarte, 1972), e.g., "The solutions to problems and changes required to improve our society can only be meaningful and long lasting if such changes come from the community itself." (p. 30) The inconsistencies appear when one examines the application of the theory.

Kenrensky and Melby (1961), two well-regarded experts in the field state, "it is important to emphasize the advisory nature of the council. The emphasis is given to the development of creative ideas to be implemented by the Community School Director and other members of the administrative staff." (p. 175) The council referred to was established for the very purpose of providing residents with a voice in the direction of community education efforts.

In a field not known for its power of self-criticism and self-analysis, this particular problem has generated concern from some observers (Griener, 1974) of the community education movement.

Perhaps the biggest flaw in the actual product contrasted to the advertised product is the lack of citizen involvement. Notable exceptions can be found, but by and large, today's community education programs are products of professionals and agencies not communities. (p. 18)

The theoretical resistance to participant control has ramifications in the programs of traditional community education projects. Actual activities that make up the program, educational, recreational and social events, while initially determined by a community needs assessment, are ultimately chosen, developed, operated and evaluated not by

the people and the community in which the programs are operated, but by the professionals who are employed to provide the program.

It is impossible to overdraw the significance of the community educator's personal view of community control. While community control has many ramifications for schools in general, it would seem to coincide with both theory and practice of community education.

In fact the opposite is true. Minzey and LeTarte (1972) state:

It does not seem to be a more viable method of involving community, as much as substituting one special interest group for another to the exclusion of other groups that need to be involved. As such, community control does not deal with community involvement, community processes or problems diverse enough to be classified as community education. (p. 9)

The field of community organization on the other hand, is oriented toward the improvement of the lives of economically deprived people within society. In viewing the concept of participant control within this context and applying it to the operation of the New Hampshire community education programs, it is important to keep in mind not only projects as they now exist but the potential of existing or newly formed groups.

In a theoretical sense, Paulo Frier's (1973) summary of the role of educators within a society is analogous to the position of activists within the community organization field, "It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours." (p. 152) The ultimate end of that dialogue is understood to be action taken in pursuance of one's goals.

This philosophy finds its allies in a number of people who have been active in the field of community organization, most notably Saul Alinsky. George Broger and Harry Specht (1969) also support this view when they write:

The value placed by social work upon neutrality, the enabling role of the worker runs counter to the necessity of converting the anger oftentimes unexpressed but felt by low income people, to action on their own behalf. (p. 226)

Critics of this view, often the professionals in the field of social work, see the function of participants in the system, "recipients of services" in their vernacular, as people with needs that can be satisfied by the delivery of more appropriate services. This view is shared by many community educators. The client role in determining the appropriateness of the services or the articulation of these problems and subsequent solution is minimal. Bloomberg (1969) states this fact in another way:

The clients are expected to accept what is offered, if not with gratitude, then at least with the decency to become less a problem. In such a system, it is almost inconceivable that they should help decide what problems are and what solutions might work well. (p. 118)

The roots of this view may lie in the characteristics and attitudes of the members of the Boards of Directors of existing social service agencies. There are a preponderance of individuals in controlling positions whose views of community change vis-a-vis low income people include little understanding of effective participant control of the change process.

Bloomberg (1969) feels that this attitude may be generated by the following situation:

The development of a controlling establishment in private welfare organizations reflects not only the economic dependence on contributions from individuals and corporate sources of wealth, but also the use of business dominated civic and service clubs to develop a sizable cadre of individuals motivated and prepared to move into boards of community agencies. (p. 117)

Community organizers operating from agencies with this type of leadership quickly become aware that the role of low income people with whom they are working is to support actions chosen by others, not to create possible solutions to their problems.

Another characteristic of social service agencies is the lack of criticism or protest that is directed from one agency to another. In its most destructive form it leads to a constant cycle of service efforts that deal only with the individual needs of clients, while never addressing the larger cultural and political problems of society that keep producing clients with these problems. It is more succinctly put in a story often told by Saul Alinsky, related by Charles Grossner (1973):

A man jumps into a river to rescue a drowning man, after saving the first victim, the rescuer is forced to jump into the river again to save a second, then a third. After the fourth rescue, he leaves the scene. When asked by an onlooker where he is going, he responds, "Upstream to stop the son-of-a-bitch who is pushing these guys into the river. (p. 149)

Social service agencies, convinced that they have the answers to the problems of the poor, are deeply involved in the process of saving each drowning client in a river that is rapidly filling with clients.

Even in those areas of community organization where the expectations are oriented toward participant involvement, the practice may not live up to the expectation. The story of an unsuccessful rent strike told by Scott Brill (1971) is typical of many of the efforts of the "activists" whose words and actions are not always in congruence.

Rather than engaging in the unquestionable, arduous task of organizing tenants, they took on the highly visible spokesman's role of making speeches, usually dramatic ones, issuing press releases, holding press conferences and engaging in heated verbal exchanges with establishment officials. (p. 152)

Thus, those who felt they "represented" the needy took over the process, rather than the people in need taking action on their own behalf. Solutions to the problems of low income people are linked to their power to produce changes in the policies that affect them. This power must be distinguished from the rhetoric which merely celebrates a non-existent power. (Brill, 1971)

Control of change processes by individuals who perceive that change is needed, is not universally accepted by those in the field of community organization and certainly not by most of those in the field of community education. The Community Learning Center Projects have shown that this principle is essential to solving some of the problems encountered by people in small New Hampshire communities.

Variety of issues addressed. The second focus of the study, the variety of the issues addressed by community education projects, must also be considered in terms of the related literature. Both community organization and community education philosophies have within their

parameters a constant debate over the range of issues and activities that ought to be addressed.

The prevailing attitude is reflected by Minzey and LeTarte (1972):

Some community educators have promoted a technique which seeks to give more attention to community social needs and subsequently results in an exaggerated sociological orientation to local problems. (p. 11)

Dr. Frank J. Manley, the founder of community school programs, limits the types of the issues addressed by describing the special activities of a community school as an attempt to make the school a "poor man's country club" (Minzey and LeTarte). (p. 174) Thus, the underlying philosophy in many community education programs is similar to that presented by Graubard (1972):

The society really means the status quo and education as a social institution is intended to perpetuate the status quo. (p. 5)

Few community educators would quarrel with Minzey and LeTarte (1972) when they say that "the ultimate value of community education lies in its ability to bring about change and subsequently resolve community problems." (p. 67) In fact, very few community educators would question the range of issues that community education programs attempt to address. The implication as seen by Trotten (1970) is that community education is responsible for:

resolving such circumstances as the struggle for human equality, the elimination of poverty, the changing balance between work and leisure time and the many forces of rebellion and protest.

The question of the variety of issues addressed by a program becomes clearer when one examines the means by which community education programs' would address these problems. Consistent with its perception of itself as a neutral entity within a community, the community education programs address issues in much the same way as any established force in the community.

The attitude is most noticeable in dealing with the issue of poverty. Trotten (1970) states that traditional educational programs address this issue by sponsoring classes for boys and girls from low income families in the selection purchase and preparation of food, vegetable growing and, for the girls, feminine growth and behavior. (p. 43) The more crucial issue of welfare payments not being adequate for necessities is not considered relevant to the concerns of community education. The analysis of a governmental system which perpetuates such circumstances is even less likely to occur.

Far different from conventional community school coordinators, the organizer of the New Hampshire Community Learning Center Projects, Robby Fried (1975), sees societal inequities as being within the realm of any educational program. He states:

Here in New Hampshire, as elsewhere in America, people living within the same town or neighborhood experience vastly different levels of power and powerlessness. As such gross inequality of power, as it does everywhere, plays itself out in exploitation and human suffering, in widespread rural poverty hidden from the eye of the tourist and the town official, in dehumanizing factory work performed for minimal wages, in adolescent dropout into drug abuse and crime, in the agonies of unhappy families stunted by the lack of awareness for personal growth,

in the abandonment of the aged and other dependent persons to isolating institutions. (p. 140)

While the problems addressed by community education and community organization programs may be similar, the approaches to solving them vary greatly. There is a great distance between those who advocate helping people in need to develop the individual and group skills needed to solve their own problems, and those who feel that the solutions to these problems lie in the increased cooperation of existing social service agencies.

Division of opinion on this issue exists even within the community organization field. The dynamics in this area revolve around the range of efforts of social service agencies to respond to the needs of low income people in society. Between the two extremes of providing direct services to individuals and helping people to achieve substantial change in the institutions that are charged with helping to alleviate poverty, are a wide variety of efforts.

The difference can be illustrated by considering the situation of a woman who has been denied welfare benefits. Social service practitioners who believe in the delivery of services school would handle the problem by assigning an individual to go to the appropriate welfare office to argue the case on behalf of the client. Those at the other end of the spectrum would advocate providing support to the client to develop the skills to interact with the welfare office. Encouragement would then be given for the individual to use these skills to change the paternalistic approach to poverty that is embodied in the concept of most welfare agencies. In the second instance, the emphasis could

be either on the interaction with the welfare office in respect to the individual's situation or upon the larger issues of changes of regulation of the structure of the system.

Those involved in social change must consider community issues within a larger context. Kramer and Specht (1969) address this question from the perspective of community organization efforts:

Larger social events like change in foreign policy, political reactions to domestic crises, and the vagaries of our economic system can effectively undercut the benefits of such mobilizations and wars on poverty. (p. 4)

Carried to the local level, Alinsky (1946) concluded that the issue was one of social service agencies and efforts showing a "complete lack of recognition of the obvious fact that the life of each neighborhood is to a major extent shaped by forces which transcend the local scene." (p. 83)

Several factors are at work in the field of community organization which determine the path which will be followed for meeting the needs of low income people. The origin of funding sources, the philosophy of the governing board of each agency and the philosophy of the staff are all relevant factors in this issue.

The federal government, the largest funding source for anti-poverty efforts, has followed a course of progressively eliminating the input that low income people can have over the course of anti-poverty programs. These programs were originally designed to solve many of their problems. The principal proponents of the change were

local and state officials who were becoming the targets of pressure from groups funded by federally funded anti-poverty agencies. As these groups became more organized in their efforts, the issue became the attitudes, policies and operation of local and state governmental agencies instead of the delivery of services to individual clients.

Created in 1964, the Economic Opportunity Act mandated the maximum feasible participation of the poor in the planning, operation and evaluation of Community Action Agencies, the principal arms of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. Attempts to modify this part of the legislation started immediately after passage. Grossner (1973) concludes that the sponsors of amendments in this area hoped "to permit cities and states to define the extent to which a project might engage in activities for change." (p. 16) A secondary objective, according to Grossner (1973), was to insure that the "prerogatives of institutions rather than constituents would be observed." (p. 17)

Movements to change the thrust of Community Action Programs were successful in 1968 with the creation of a new anti-poverty funding program: Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, better known as Model Cities Program. While the Community Action Agencies had governing boards made up of a mixture of low income people and government officials, with up to a 51% majority of poverty level persons, the Model City Agencies emerged from the legislative process with the final local authority for approval of projects being the mayors and city councils of the cities in the program. Citizen participation components

were written into the legislative mandate, but the change in governing boards left little opportunity for meaningful participation of low income people.

The trend away from the involvement of low income people in the process continued when the Model Cities legislation was transformed in 1974 into the Community Development Act. Under this legislation, there was no provision made for the inclusion of low income people into the policy making process. Even the requirement of the Model Cities legislation that a separate city agency be established to administer the funds was dropped. In the past the existence of a new city agency to administer the program had allowed for low income participation in some cities.

The money for Community Development now goes directly to the respective city councils where the spending decisions are made. The most visible difference in the resulting programs from this trend has been the shift from projects to the field of human services to physical improvements, e.g., repair of streets, sewers, bridges, etc.

An analysis of the economic and social backgrounds of persons who serve on the governing boards of social service agencies provides some answers to the question of how wide a variety of issues should be addressed by the agencies which they guide. Again, the apparent issues of concern may receive universal support but the methods used to attack them vary widely. After analyzing the approaches used to deal with the lack of income and resources of some members of society, one is left with conviction expressed by Bloomberg (1969), that the "status quo with

respect to community organization needs no basic revision or renovation. (p. 118)

Those activities which have the potential for changing the status quo usually are not found in the range of actions of these agencies. Evidence of this situation can be found in numerous organizations which have been established to aid the less fortunate in our communities. But as Bloomberg (1969) states, "If Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions or other clubs of this type were all disbanded in the same week, there is little evidence that the life of most communities would undergo significant change." (p. 121)

When the issue of delivery of services vs. institutional change is raised with boards of directors, the problem of finite levels of money for agency services is considerable. Even in agencies when the social change effort becomes a priority, the need to provide some direct services sets up a situation where neither objective can be adequately fulfilled within the context of the agencies present resources.

The problem faced by staff persons is, (according to Bloomberg, 1969), "Whether to commit organizational resources to the provision of services to meet pressing community needs or to social action to change the existing service system." (p. 149) Transcending the decision to move an agency in one direction or another is the very low level of resources that our society commits to social service programs, particularly in light of the amounts spent by individuals and government in other areas.

This situation is graphically illustrated by a poster found in

many day care centers, "It'll be a great day when our day care centers have all the money they need and the navy has to hold a bake sale to buy battleships." For low income people it means that the liberalization of food stamp benefits for one group means the elimination of another group from eligibility for any benefits and a new school for one area means the continued existence of an old school in another.

Broger and Specht (1969) agree that the conclusion ultimately drawn by those who have been involved in successful organizations of low income people is that, "The underlying issues are really political. That the problems of the poor require political action and political action requires power." (p. 224)

The community education effort of the Community Learning Center Project in New Hampshire has, over its four year history, not been oriented toward the needs of low income people. But in its conception there is the potential for addressing the needs of those who have few if any vehicles for developing skills to gain some control over their own lives.

Variety of people involved in process. The third area of concern in this study is the involvement of a wide variety of people in the community education process. In this regard it is important to ask if the processes or programs aimed at improving people's lives use appropriate methods to publicize, attract and involve clients in the operation of the process.

The political movement away from the involvement of low income people

in the operation of programs designed to benefit them has been accompanied in recent years, according to Coleman (1969), by private agencies disengaging from the poor and providing more and more services to the already advantaged middle class. (p. 23) As the number of middle and upper income people has increased on the governing boards of social service agencies involved in community organization, the movement away from services for only low income people has increased.

The problem has been identified in the functioning of the Community Learning Center core groups in New Hampshire (Stuart Langton Associates, 1979):

...a continuing problem for established core groups is publicizing themselves and reaching those sectors of the community population which traditionally have not participated. (p. 28)

Agencies and movements devoted to basic community organization have found that it is impossible to develop movements whose basic strength rests upon the energy and skills of those who are often identified as unreachable. There is no easy solution to this problem, but there is sufficient evidence available to conclude that assertions that low income people do not want to participate in guiding an agency's program, says more about the lack of relevance of the program to the needs of the people than of the people's disinterest in that activity.

Impact upon the self-image of participants. The final focus of the chapter is the examination of the effect of participation in a social change process upon the self-image of the clients. The literature is filled with studies and examinations of the effect of the process upon

the immediate needs of people, but examinations of its impact beyond that point are rare. What does exist in the area is limited to a few case studies within a limited problem area, e.g., rent strikes, school problems, etc.

Neumann and Oliver (1967) speak to a general feeling of powerlessness that seems to be present in many people before they make the decision to become involved in efforts to change their situations:

- ^ There is the sense that no individual has significant control over his own destiny, but in the face of such conditions as impersonal bureaucracies, the growing influence of corporate structures and extreme social mobility and change it is difficult for the individual to see how he affects the determination of social policy or the making of decisions that have profound effects on his life. (p. 67)

Organizations that focus upon the individuals involved in community organization efforts are attempting to provide a vehicle by which some measure of success can be gained, not only in terms of the immediate goal of the effort, but also with the realization by the participants that the success was a result of their actions, as opposed to the actions of staff people or agencies. More traditional theoreticians (Levy, 1970) counter that power through participation may be "more a moral than a true victory, more a myth than a reality at least when it comes to fundamental and enduring institutional changes." (p. 105)

Traditional community education efforts and most social service agencies involved with the delivery of services concept find little reason to consider the impact of their operation upon individual clients. In service systems with rigidly defined roles for staff and clients

there is an almost universal need to build a perception of "them and us." The most unfortunate aspect of this situation lies in viewing clients as people needing to emulate the qualities of the staff people with whom they work. It does not allow for the development of skills and attitudes on the part of clients who are outside the realm of familiarity of the project staff. Consequently people are given pre-determined answers to their problems, rather than developing answers from within their own resources. It is the impact of this approach to social service and community change efforts on the individual client that has received little attention.

The Community Learning Center Project in New Hampshire, where the philosophy is one of participants being in control of the entire process, seems to provide a testing ground for the impact of the process upon the individual. The possible outcomes may be seen in two areas: the change in self-perception that may come about by participating in the process and the transfer of skills learned in the project to attempts at change in other areas.

In summary, the uniqueness of the New Hampshire Community Learning Center Project makes it difficult to draw conclusive lessons from the literature of community organization and community education. However, both areas do provide a framework for examining the four major elements of the study. Underlying all four areas is the issue of the distribution of resources and power in society.

This chapter has looked at two views: one which works at a better use of existing services and the other which seeks to empower people to

make fundamental changes in society and in their own lives. The investigator has examined the ramifications of the dichotomy particularly in regard to low income people. He has observed that the New Hampshire Project exemplifies one part of community action theory by advocating the empowerment of people to meet their own needs and thereby enabling them to address issues of fundamental change. He has shown how the Community Learning Center Project contrasts sharply with the philosophical base of the community school and traditional social service approaches in which people designate themselves as experts and attempt to solve other people's problems.

CHAPTER III

DATA COLLECTION

Since there was little available data on the Community Learning Center Project, it was necessary to design a data collection strategy that would deal primarily with the feelings, reactions and answers of participants within a sizable number of core groups. For that reason, the decision was made to concentrate data collection efforts on a series of in-depth interviews with a high percentage of the current active participants in the core groups of existing Community Learning Center projects.

The questionnaires for the interviews were constructed by designing a series of questions that relate to the four elements upon which the hypothesis of the study is built: participant control, variety of the issues addressed, access to the process by a wide variety of persons in the community, and the impact of the process upon the self-image of participating individuals. The investigator also tape recorded the conversations with all of the participants in the study, thereby gaining information relative to the study that was not elicited by the structured interview.

The investigator and the State Director of Community Education, (the originator of the Community Learning Center Projects in New Hampshire), identified forty active core group members as the study population. They represented the five learning center projects that were considered to be the most successful in the state.

Early in the planning for data gathering, the decision was made to base the effort on the participant's perceptions of the community education process and its impact upon them. The investigator determined that the four key elements upon which the study was based could be used as focal points for the series of questions that would make up the structured interviews. While the core group participants would not necessarily be aware of the specific areas in which the questions were being asked, no attempt was made to conceal any of those areas of interest from the interviewees.

After developing the questionnaires with the assistance of the Chairperson of the investigator's Dissertation Committee and the consultant to the Committee, (the New Hampshire Director of Community Education), the final draft was sent to a former participant in a core group that was not included in the study. She raised a number of questions regarding the phrasing of some items and the relevance of others to the purpose of the study. Most helpful were her suggestions to note in the study the numbers of men and women in the core groups and to limit the use of educational jargon in the questionnaire. This input was incorporated into the final draft of the questionnaire.

In order to elicit the greatest amount of information from each core group participant, the investigator decided to tape record the conversation with each individual that took place following the administration of the written questionnaire. While the discussions varied from individual to individual, most of the conversations revolved around the areas selected for study in the dissertation.

It is important to note that the tape recorded conversations were instrumental in providing further elaboration of points that core group participants made in the questionnaires. It was also very obvious that the people involved in the study were more comfortable discussing basic issues concerning the core group than they were in answering detailed questions in writing. Taken together, the completed questionnaire and the one-to-one hours of conversation provided a comprehensive picture of each individual's perception of the topic included in the study.

The forty interviews for this study were all conducted between April 16, 1977 and May 21, 1977. In most instances, the interviews were conducted in the home of the core group participant. A few took place in the place of work of the core group member.

The standard procedure was to arrange the interview by telephone one week prior to the time it was intended to take place. A time and place was established for the investigator to meet with the core group participant in his or her home "to discuss some aspects of your involvement in the Community Learning Group." At the time of the telephone call, the investigator asked the core group member if he or she would be willing to fill out the questionnaire and also discuss the Community Learning Center group on tape with the investigator.

Each person being interviewed was asked to complete the questionnaire before discussing the project with the investigator. If questions arose during the interview concerning particular items in the questionnaire, the investigator attempted to provide similar explanations of identical questions to each person. After completing the interview,

the investigator and core group participant would spend up to two hours discussing a variety of issues related to the functioning of the core group in that particular community.

It is important to note the effect of the person-to-person interaction in the collection of data. When examining a process which is based upon people working together toward group decisions, it is important to communicate with the participants in this process in a manner that is comfortable and non-threatening. Incorporating the personal application of the questionnaire with the informal conversations provided more accurate data and a better feeling for the process than could have been gained by mailing the questionnaire to the participants for completion and return.

Each of the questions in the questionnaire was keyed to one of the four elements that were under consideration. This allowed for the analysis of responses in each area that cut across the five local groups. Conclusions were then drawn as to the validity of the particular hypothesis under consideration.

The second method of analysis consisted of separating the respondents' answers by local group, then analyzing the responses in an effort to discern any substantial differences between the five local groups.

The data from the interviews was most useful in helping the investigator gain a sense of the individuals participating in the groups rather than the groups as a whole. Since the questions raised in these discussions were not always identical from one individual to

another, it was difficult to use the responses as hard data that would fit into a common framework. However, it was valuable in the sense that it provided a wealth of information from the participants that went beyond the answers given in the questionnaire.

In many cases the input of an individual in the conversation following the interview did not agree with his responses on the questionnaire. Analyzing those instances after spending a considerable time in each participant's home, the investigator concluded that the informal response was probably closer to the true feelings of the person being interviewed than his responses to the questionnaire. The data contained on the tapes provides a more general but extremely valid view of the areas under consideration in the study.

A third source of information, beyond the questionnaire and interview, was the doctoral dissertation of the originator of the Community Learning Center concept, Dr. Robby Fried. Further information was obtained from the results of the interim evaluation of the projects which took place in 1975. Both documents were instrumental in providing background information on the hypothesis proposed by the investigator.

The procedures followed in setting up each Community Learning group were of particular importance. The assumptions that some participants made about the mission of the group could be tied to the comments of individuals at the original meeting. But perhaps the most important role that Dr. Fried's dissertation played was in clearly stating the philosophical groundwork on which the projects were based. His hopes for the future of the groups and the individuals therein serve as goals that may

be reached by the groups in the years to come.

The dissertation of Dr. Fried was also extremely helpful in exploring the history of the project. That dissertation was also important for this study as it allows the Community Learning Center Project to be viewed in the broad scope of citizens attempting to gain power through their own efforts. For that reason, the thoughts and visions of the Community Learning Center Project founder are invaluable.

Results of the interim evaluation were used, where appropriate, to supplement the information received from the questionnaire and conversations. In most of the areas, there was very little data of a specific nature that was helpful, but in most instances the results of the evaluation touched upon some part of the topics under consideration in this study.

Study Population

The study population was made up of forty people, all of whom were active in the core groups of the five Community Learning Center projects under consideration. Only those core group members who had attended at least 50% of the core group meetings in the past year were used for the study.

Initially the study population was to consist of eight people from each project, but due to the temporary inactivity of the project located in Bristol, only four people from that group could be involved. To insure that the target goal of forty was achieved, additional members

of the core groups in the other four communities were surveyed. Following each town are the number of interviewees from that project:

Raymond-nine, Rollinsford-nine, Bristol-four, Kingston-ten, and Hopkinton-Contoocook-eight.

It appeared that a sample of eight persons from each group would provide a comprehensive response to the questions posed in the questionnaire. During the course of the study it became evident that this figure would insure the desired outcome, as the total of forty represents approximately ninety-three percent of the active membership of the five core groups.

The individuals in the groups represent a wide diversity of backgrounds and interests. In one instance the group included most of the elected government officials and local civic group leaders in the community. In another community the group contained a mixture of long-time residents and new arrivals to the town. Extremes in ages were represented in one group by a seventy-three year old grandmother and a young couple of 23 years of age. Females made up a large majority of the forty core group participants in the study.

The following summaries are based upon the investigator's interviews with the core group participants and his knowledge of each community. In some instances, the visits to a community were the first for the investigator, while in others there was extensive prior experience with the town.

The summaries are not intended to give the reader a comprehensive view of the membership, activities or goals of each group but simply

to provide a sense of the composition and current status of the five core groups.

Rollinsford. The Rollinsford group had ceased functioning as an active Community Learning Center group by the time that the investigator completed the interviewing of the participants. During its active period, the group functioned as a focal point for a great number of community interests. All of the members of the core group had been active community members long before the project began in the town.

Here, as in another community studied, the group served as an entry point into the community for new families moving to the area. Membership in the core group enabled these newcomers to become involved in town politics, a major interest of most of the native New Hampshire core group members.

While the core group no longer exists, each of the former members has remained involved in a project that he had undertaken as an activity of the group. Ranging from informational sessions on town government to publishing a community newspaper, these activities represent one of the possible outcomes of a Community Learning Center group.

Raymond. The Raymond core group represents a wide variety of ages. Several of its members are in their early and mid-twenties and relatively new to the community, while two other members, a retired school teacher and a seventy-three year old grandmother have lived in Raymond most of their lives. It was in Raymond that the most "typical" Community Learning Center group existed. Having sponsored a wide variety of craft and

skill activities for three years, the group was actively considering a move into other areas of interest.

Younger members of the group advocated activities such as Legal Assistance attorneys speaking on landlord-tenant law and consumer rights. This particular focus is indicative of part of the core group membership which is actively involved in another Raymond project: a Community Health Center which is moving to examine the needs of the total community.

Since January, 1977, this group has begun to re-examine its role in the community. There seems to be an attempt by part of the membership of the group to expand the scope and range of activities that could be offered.

Kingston. This group's active membership is almost entirely women. Successful attempts have been made to include men in various activities sponsored by the group, but there has been little participation in the actual core group. Many of the most active members of the group are also involved in a great number of other community activities. This factor has caused the group to question whether or not it would continue in the future.

Faced with a growing influx of people and business into their southern New Hampshire community, the core group decided to continue for another year. The decision was made to include some of the community concerns of town growth as part of the group's activities for the future.

The philosophy of empowerment: people gaining control over their

lives is perhaps closer to reality in the activities of the Kingston group than with any of the others.

Bristol. Now inactive, this group at one time carried out activities with residents of six rural central New Hampshire communities. The leadership from that effort is currently attempting to revitalize the core group. The wide geographic area to be served has been a problem for the group, both in terms of convincing people to travel from community to community for a class and in the publicizing of events.

Hopkinton-Contoocook. Hopkinton is a small New Hampshire town with very little industry, a large number of old white colonial homes and is the home of many State of New Hampshire employees who work in nearby Concord.

The median income of most Hopkinton residents is substantially above that of the residents of the other communities involved with the Community Learning Center Project. That is certainly true when compared to the residents of Contoocook, a section of Hopkinton, that does not reflect the high income characteristic of the rest of the town. Attempts to interest residents of the Contoocook section of Hopkinton in the group's activities have not been successful.

Statistical Information: Towns

	<u>Pop. (1977)</u>	<u>% change from 1970</u>	<u>median family income</u>	<u>rank in state (232 total)</u>	<u>% of families below poverty line</u>	<u>Rank</u>
Bristol	2015	+20.7	\$12,343	154	9.9	141
Hopkinton	3352	+11.5	\$19,125	6	4.1	27
Kingsston	3931	+36.4	\$12,868	136	7.4	96
Raymond	4597	+53.1	\$12,692	145	7.8	105
Rollinsford	2232	- 1.8	\$14,769	63	7.5	99

Statistical Information: Community Learning Center Core Group

	<u>Sex</u>		<u>Age</u>			
	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>20-30</u>	<u>30-40</u>	<u>40-50</u>	<u>50-</u>
Bristol		4				1
Hopkinton	1	7	1	2	3	1
Kingsston	1	9		5	4	1
Raymond	3	6		4	3	2
Rollinsford	5	4		5	2	2

C H A P T E R I V

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Chapter three focused upon the sample population and the strategies designed for data collection for the study. The intent of the investigator was to enable the reader to gain some understanding of the citizens and communities involved in the study as well as the relationship of the data gathering activities to the four hypotheses under consideration.

Chapter four addresses the data from the study as it relates to the four hypotheses. Those hypotheses related to the following areas: (1) participant control, (2) variety of the issues addressed, (3) involvement in the process by a variety of people and (4) the impact of the process upon the self-image of the individual participants. Part I of the chapter relates the data from all of the questionnaires to the hypotheses. Part II compares the responses of each learning group to the hypotheses.

Analysis and Interpretation by
Individual Responses

Hypothesis I. All of the Community Learning Center core groups chosen for the study will show a high level of participant control of the community education process. Data from questions related to Hypothesis I: Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 16, and 17 were constructed to elicit information in the area of participant control. The combination of yes/no, multiple choice and open-ended questions provided extensive data related to Hypothesis I.

Question 3. "Who makes the important decisions for the Community Learning Center core group in your community?"

"we all do, the group itself, all those in the group, those who assume leadership roles, no one person, it is truly a group project, certain individuals emerge as leaders, however, the role of leader is not acknowledged by the group as a whole, the role tends to shift from person-to-person, everyone, its more of a consensus than decision."

Question 4.* What role did the group leader, (organizer from outside the community), play in decision making in your core group?

<u>0</u> Made decisions for the group	<u>14</u> Trained us to run our own meetings
<u>11</u> Held group together	<u> </u> Got group started, then played a facilitating role

Question 5. Do you feel that you were in any way limited in your participation in the decision making in your core group?

<u>1</u> yes	<u>31</u> no
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Question 6. What process is used by the core group to make decisions?

<u>1</u> Voting	<u>11</u> Consensus	<u>28</u> Group discussions
<u>0</u> Other		

Question 16. Does the success or failure of the Community Learning Center Program in your community lie with the members of your local core group?

<u>27</u> yes	<u>3</u> no
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Question 17. Does the Community Learning Center Project in your community enable people to gain some control over their own education?

<u>29</u> yes	<u>1</u> no
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Responses to question 3 indicate that the participants feel they controlled the group. It was important to survey the study population

*Some respondents did not answer all of the questions on the questionnaire.

to determine how they perceived their degree of ownership over the process. While control and ownership are not necessarily synonymous, in this context they reflect common outlooks.

Question 4 sought to gain some data that could clarify the extent to which participants perceived the outside organizer. It seems justified to conclude from the responses that the organizer was not a major force in determining major directions in which the group should go.

Of all the questions related to participant control question 5 is perhaps the most important. Thirty-one of the thirty-two respondents to the question supported the proposition that they alone were responsible for the extent to which they participated in the decision making within the group.

It would be possible for a group to be utilizing a democratic process for both choosing leaders and making major decisions while systematically limiting the impact of the minority within the group. It does not appear from the results of the study that this was the case in any of the core groups.

Questions 16 and 17 addressed the issue of control over the process in a slightly broader context. The answers to these questions provide further documentation of the position that not only do the core group participants control the process, they are essentially responsible for the outcomes of community education in a particular town.

Comments of participants during the taped interviews also supported the conclusion that a high level of participant control does exist in the core group. In some cases these comments went beyond the answers on

the questionnaires, both in degree and impact. For instance, the comment from a Kingston participant relative to the participation of the outside organizer: "the group did not jell until Robby was out of the picture" or this comment from a member of another group that asked for more direction from the organizer but never received it, "afterwards we saw what he was trying to do."

All of the data gained from participants through the questionnaires and interviews supported the hypothesis that the participants have a high level of control over the community education process.

Hypothesis II: All of the Community Learning Center core groups chosen for the study will address a wide variety of activities in the community.

Data from questions related to Hypothesis II was drawn primarily from question 7. Questions 8, 9, 10 and 11 were related directly to question seven and produced incomplete data which will be analyzed and interpreted as part of question seven. In addition, the Final Evaluation Report on the projects, published in July, 1975, and the taped interviews with participants provided data about the types of activities sponsored by the groups.

The Final Evaluation Report (Stuart Langton Associates, 1975) concluded that "although the activities of the Learning groups are diverse the majority can be categorized under the areas (1) Crafts, (2) Recreation, (3) Do It Yourself and Practical Skills." (p. 9) The five Community Learning Center groups used as the sample for the evaluation are the same five groups identified for the study in this dissertation.

A study of the interviews with participants indicates that the conclusions of the evaluation are correct. The activities identified by participants in the interviews, i.e., chinese cooking, rug braiding, first aid, quilting, physical fitness, ceramics and astrology all seem to fall into those categories identified in the conclusion of the evaluation. Two of the areas that were not mentioned in the evaluation report but appeared as priorities for various core group members were a series of lectures by New Hampshire Legal Assistance attorneys in Raymond and sessions on zoning and land-use planning in Rollinsford.

As discussed in chapter I, a goal of the study was to examine the potential of the Community Learning Center Projects to achieve the hypotheses in the future, if they had not done so prior to the date of the study. In the case of the first hypothesis concerning participant control, this is not a factor since the groups have all been successful in that area. However, hypothesis two must be examined since it appears that some of the projects did not address a wide variety of issues. Question 7 which asks the respondent to indicate his perception of the appropriateness of the listed activity is particularly useful in this regard.

Question 7. A variety of community activities are listed below. I would like to learn how appropriate or inappropriate you feel each activity is, regardless of whether or not your core group sponsored it. Please circle the number that most closely expresses your feeling of the appropriateness of the activity for core group involvement in your community.

		<u>not appropriate</u>			<u>very appropriate</u>	
		1	2	3	4	5
A.	Providing craft and hobby instruction	0	0	2	2	22
B.	Providing recreational activities	4	3	10	5	10
C.	Assisting persons to better understand their rights under state law, e.g., state welfare benefits	2	3	7	6	16
D.	Assisting persons to better understand their rights under local regulations, e.g., town welfare	2	3	5	9	16
E.	Organizing people in support of state-wide environmental concerns such as nuclear power	9	6	5	5	15
F.	Organizing people around local environmental concerns, e.g., inadequate sewage systems, recycling, beautification, etc.	2	6	6	7	12
G.	Participating in the development of employment opportunities such as helping to bring new businesses to town	16	7	3	2	6
H.	Evaluating the effectiveness of educational programs of the local schools.	5	5	9	3	9
I.	Working in a campaign to pass or defeat a local school bond issue	11	6	2	5	10
J.	Assisting local people in need, e.g., locating appropriate resources such as food stamps and state welfare assistance	11	5	4	6	10

It is not surprising that the activities identified as being very appropriate for sponsorship by local core groups were crafts and hobby instruction. This outcome is consistent with the preponderance of activities currently sponsored by the groups. However, it is important to note that activities addressing more political issues within the community also received support as being appropriate for core group involvement.

The Raymond core group stands out as one of the groups that has broadened its program to include activities that go beyond the craft and hobby classes. Sponsorship of the Legal Assistance workshops is an example of the core group's attempts to provide a community education program that will address a wider variety of issues.

It is clear that the potential exists for the groups to move into other areas not yet a part of the current activities. This potential is somewhat tempered by the comments of a number of respondents who feel that new directions are not appropriate for their group. Even though they as individuals would like to see the group move in some new directions, they feel that the core group would not support such action. Beyond that they also feel that to attempt to push the group into such actions would cause irreversible splits between core group members.

It is clear from the data that hypothesis II is not supported by all five core groups. Rather than addressing a wide variety of issues, most of the groups tend to focus their efforts on what might be defined as traditional community education concerns. The comment

of one Hopkinton participant is illustrative of the situation, "this is a program for enrichment of the individual, not a political, social action group."

Hypothesis III: All of the Community Learning Center core groups chosen for the study will involve a wide variety of people from the community in the community education process.

Questions relating to Hypothesis III: Questions 12, 13, 14, and 18 address the issue of the variety of people involved in the core group process. The questions examine both the methods used by the existing groups to attract new members and the perceptions of current members of other groups from the community not yet involved in the core group.

Question 12. What efforts did people in the core group make to include new members?

Question 13. When new members attended core group meetings, what efforts were made to make them feel welcome?

Question 14. Why did new members attend one meeting of the core group but not return for others?

- A. 23 too busy, they never intended to become members
- B. 3 group already well organized, no real role for newcomers
- C. 8 group too loosely organized, no coherent structure to fit into
- D. 4 group too ingrown, hard for new people to work in
- E. 1 other

Question 18. Are there individuals or groups in your community who would benefit from the Community Learning Center activities but are not now involved?

36 yes

 no

Please list any groups that come to mind such as senior citizens, low income groups, teenagers, men, women, blue collar workers, white collar workers, etc.

Responses to question 18 show that senior citizens, low income groups and young people were listed as the three groups that could most benefit from participation in the group, but had not yet been present in any significant numbers. Observation of the investigator while interviewing the forty participants verified these answers to question 18. There were no teenagers, few senior citizens and almost no people who could be classified as low income among the survey sample.

The conclusions expressed went beyond the need for participation of their groups in core group meetings, to the need for participation from these groups in the activities and classes offered as part of the Community Learning Center Projects. During the interviews people talked about the efforts made to publicize activities to groups that were underrepresented. Most of the groups had attempted a number of activities to make the local community aware of the existence of classes sponsored by the group. Posters in centrally located stores, doctors' offices, and laundromats, as well as word-of-mouth, were utilized by all of the groups. From this perspective, it is fair to conclude that the process for including others was open but, not particularly effective.

The results from question 13, (Why did new members attend one meeting of the core group but not return for others?), must be viewed in light of the actions that were used to help new people continue as participants in the group. Informal meetings, asking newcomers for ideas and feelings, time for socializing, were all given as ways that the core group members attempted to include others in the group.

These efforts were preceded by similar actions on the part of core group members to bring new people to meetings: offering rides, inviting friends, holding informal dinners and invitations issued by telephone were all used extensively.

The composition of the core groups had not changed substantially since their inceptions, in some cases four years prior to the time of the interviews by the investigator. The most extreme change in any group was a turnover of 50% of the original core group membership. In others only one or two individuals had been added or had dropped out over a two and one-half or three year period. Obviously new people joined the core group as the years progressed, yet there seemed to have been a larger number who attended at least one meeting but decided not to return.

The data from the participants in the study and the observation of the investigator do not support the hypothesis that the groups will show a wide variety of participants. The core groups seem to be motivated to reach that goal but a variety of attempts in this area over several years have not had the desired result.

Hypothesis IV: All of the Community Learning Center core groups chosen for the study will show a high level of positive impact upon the self-image of the individuals in the core group.

Questions related to Hypothesis IV: Questions 15, 19, 20, and 21 relate to the impact of the core group process upon the self-image of participants. While the yes/no and multiple choice questions provided helpful information, the most important responses were linked to the open questions 20 and 21.

Question 15. In your opinion does the Community Learning Center Project tend to provide a positive self-image to those involved in the local core group?

30 yes 0 no

Question 19. Which part of the Community Learning Center group has been the most important to you?

core group participation 25 student 14 teacher 8

Question 20. Has participation in the Community Learning Center core group been helpful to you in developing and using new skills? If this has happened to you, could you describe the skills?

Question 21. Has participation in the Community Learning Center core group been helpful to you in developing and using skills that you knew you possessed but had not been able to use? If this has happened to you, could you describe the skills?

It was apparent to the investigator that the ten people who did not answer question 15 but addressed the general area during their interview agreed with the answers of the thirty core group participants summarized above. It is not a surprising reaction, elicited from people some of whom have spent four years working on the project. Questions 19,

20, and 21 were asked in an attempt to identify the specific parts of the learning group process that participants felt were responsible for the positive self-image gained through participation in the group.

Question 19 explores the roles that participants played in the group and the relative importance of those roles to the individuals involved. Since all of the individuals had played at least two roles within the community education process, it is difficult to draw conclusions about which method of participation was most responsible for a more positive self-image.

Question 20 attempted to identify specific skills that participation in the group had helped individuals to develop and use. Twenty-seven of the participants indicated that their participation had resulted in the development of use of at least one skill. Many of the skills identified were those that participants were able to develop in the various activities sponsored by the group. Among those were woodworking, sewing, first aid, plumbing and auto mechanics.

Core group participants also indicated that they had acquired a number of new skills related to working in groups. These skills could be used to address a number of individuals' concerns outside the concept of community education, as traditionally defined.

Examples of these skills included, "sharpening skills as a teacher, becoming a leader instead of a follower, helping strengthen my ability to work with people and involve them, create awareness of lack of personal skill in group dynamics, setting goals, sharpening one's ability to express oneself and make an opinion known." All of these are vital

elements in a pattern of personal empowerment, which allows people to develop skills, attitudes and abilities that can be used to effectively change their environment.

Responses to question 21 centered upon those skills that were related specifically to courses and those that were more relevant to an individual's involvement in the total group process. Examples of the former were quilting and stenciling. It is important to note that the majority of responses related to group process skills. Many dealt with the exercise of leadership and the skills needed to bring people together to work on a common problem. "I've learned to say no," improved group management and leadership skills, community organizing skills, listening skills and helping to secure volunteers are a few of the skills identified in this area.

While fewer people responded in the affirmative to question 21 than to question 20, it was obvious that a substantial number of core group participants felt that they had within themselves many of the skills necessary for community leadership and that the Community Learning Center Project provided a vehicle by which they could not only benefit the community but also themselves.

It is also obvious that the data from the questionnaires and interviews overwhelmingly support the hypothesis that the participants in the projects have a positive self-image as a result of their participation. It is less obvious but nevertheless apparent that this positive view is linked to the development and utilization of new skills.

Hypotheses I and IV, those related to participant control and positive

self-image were substantiated by the study. Hypotheses II and III dealing with a wide range of activities sponsored by each group and a wide variety of people as core group participants were not substantiated. Some of the five groups did fulfill part of the goals set in hypotheses II and III but all of them did not. Part II of this chapter examines in greater detail the activities of the five learning groups.

Analysis and Interpretation of Responses by Local Group

Part II of the chapter analyzes the data from the study in the context of each local core group. This section should give the reader a better understanding of the local environment in which each group functioned.

Raymond. As with most of the groups, the Raymond participants supported the hypothesis that the members of the core group held the major responsibility for the control of the group. Their difficulty, which was typical of the other groups, has been to generate sufficient members of the core group to spread the burden of work from the small nucleus that has existed since the initial formation of the group.

It is with the Raymond group that the issue of appropriate activities for the project is currently under consideration. This issue is being raised by three of the younger core group members who have ties with the local community action agency. Other core group members are active participants in the Raymond Health Center, which seeks to address a wide variety of community needs. The fact that members are involved with these two agencies seems to be of importance in causing the Community

Learning Center core group to consider addressing the needs of low income people, along with other non-traditional community education activities. Tangible evidence of activity in these areas can be seen in the core group sponsorship of a series of lectures/discussions on consumer issues pertinent to low income people, given by staff attorneys from the New Hampshire Legal Assistance Office in Manchester.

Recruiting new members for the core group and classes sponsored by the core group has been of paramount concern. The diversity of class offerings, from yoga to landlord-tenant law, indicates that the group is aiming for the involvement of a cross section of people from the community. They are probably the most successful in this area of the five groups involved in the study.

Results of the interviews and the data from the questionnaire indicate that all ten members of the core group agreed that their involvement with the Community Learning Center had had a positive impact upon their self-image. This view is shared by those who have been involved since the beginning of the group as well as by those who had been active for only the past year. Indicators of support for this conclusion are found in the decision of the group to increase the number of meetings each year and to increase both the number and scope of activities sponsored by the group.

Kingston. The Kingston Community Learning Center group shows a great similarity to the Raymond group. Separated by only one town, the two groups seem to be located in an area which lends itself to a common

set of problems for both individuals and communities.

Individual control of the direction of the core group by the participants was indicated by nine active members of the group. Their comments showed that some of the members were aware of the varying leadership roles played by each person, but the responses also indicated that the group as a whole was responsible for the success or failure of the effort in Kingston. Also indicative of control by the core group was the fact that the group had not been in contact with the organizer of the original effort for over one year, yet they had continued to function.

The willingness of the core group participants to explore new areas of activity was indicated by the strong support within the group for becoming involved in the evaluation of school programs and taking a more direct responsibility for examining and supporting the school budget. In these two areas they have surpassed the Raymond group. A partial reason for this attitude was the dissatisfaction of six of the members with the level of participation of local citizens in classes that had been sponsored over the past year. They indicated that if the core group could move into areas that were of immediate concern to more citizens, their program would attract a greater number of Kingston residents. Adding to the sense of a need for change by the group was the rapid physical growth of the community and the subsequent implications for land use planning.

Again, as in Raymond, all ten members of the core group said that participation in the group tended to provide a positive self-image to the membership. The group maintenance and organizational aspects of the core

group were mentioned by seven of the group members as being the most important areas in which they had developed individual skills. Comments in this area ranged from "being a leader instead of a follower" to "I've learned to say no." The overall impression left with the investigator from talking with the Kingston participants was one of commitment to the community education process, both for themselves and for the community.

Hopkinton-Contoocook. As in the Raymond and Kingston groups, all of the core group members agreed that the people responsible for controlling the direction of the core group were the participants themselves.

Their responses indicated that they were evenly split between the three major roles that the outside facilitator played in the early life of the group. Four persons indicated that he held the group together while it organized itself, five indicated that he trained the group to run itself and five responses indicated that he got the group started and then played a facilitating role. This group had operated by itself, without assistance from the project's originator for the last two years.

There are a number of indications from the data that the Hopkinton-Contoocook group was quite different from either Kingston or Raymond. With the exception of substantial support for items a, b on question 7, (appropriateness of activities for the group), only two persons checked the scale at the level five for any of the remaining eight choices. At least 50% of the Hopkinton-Contoocook respondents circled number 1 or 2 for those items, indicating a belief that those activities were not

appropriate for core group sponsorship.

The follow-up questions to question 7 showed six people in the core group indicating that most of the activities on the list were too controversial. In addition there was equal support for the position that the group was not expert enough in the areas included on the list to choose them as appropriate subjects for core group involvement. What appears is a profile of the core group which is relatively satisfied with the range of activities offered and sees little need to expand into other areas.

Tied to this issue is the area of the variety of people involved in the core group. Respondents to the questionnaire indicated that they felt a need to attract persons from groups not currently involved. Low income people, senior citizens and blue collar workers were mentioned most often in this regard. One person addressed both this problem and that of the lack of a wider variety of activities by saying "we need to broaden our program from the fairly middle-class courses we now sponsor."

One draws the conclusion that the group is anxious to include persons who have not been involved in the past, but is unwilling to recognize that these persons may be interested in a variety of issues that the present group is not willing to address. This situation is distinctly different from that in Kingston and Raymond where the groups were attempting to identify new areas of courses and interests that could be utilized to attract a wider variety of persons to their programs.

Each of the core group participants interviewed for the study from Hopkinton-Contoocook expressed a very positive view of their experience

with the Community Learning Center group. Six of the nine provided examples of specific skills that they felt they did not possess before entering the group but had now developed and would use in the future. Among those were goal setting, sharpening one's ability to express oneself, making an opinion known, chinese cooking and meeting new people. In this regard the responses of this group were similar to those of the other four groups included in the study.

Bristol. It may be incorrect to discuss the responses of the Bristol "group" since there were only four persons available who had been part of the functioning core group. Having curtailed much of the group's activity during the winter of 1976-77, the four members of the group were planning on a revival in the fall of 1977.

The four people interviewed fully supported the position of individual control of the community education program. There seemed to be no disagreement about the responsibility that was a part of each individual's participation in the group. They were all fully cognizant of the fact that the group had ceased to function in the past as a result of their decisions and would operate again if they so wished.

The Bristol group had sponsored a series of courses on human potential. This was one of their most successful workshops. As a result the perceptions of the three members regarding the appropriateness of activities goes beyond the recreational and craft courses favored by the Hopkinton-Contoocook group, yet it does not approach the support for other activities to the degree expressed by the participants from Raymond or Kingston. For

each example in question 7 the responses of the three Bristol participants ranged from 1, not appropriate, to 5 very appropriate. Verbal comments regarding this issue expressed both the need to explore other issues and the controversial nature of straying too far from the courses that had been successful in the past.

The Bristol group had attempted many of the techniques used by other groups to attract new members to the core group. Personal recruitment, advertisements in local stores and newspapers had all been used to attempt to broaden the group's membership. Teenagers and young adults were identified as being the target groups of greatest priority for core group involvement.

The wide geographic area that the core group attempted to serve, six towns, complicated efforts to attract a specific group from a specific town for an activity. Much of the publicity effort went into attempting to publicize core group activities to all groups within the participating towns, leaving little energy for designing specific approaches to special interest groups, e.g., senior citizens, teenagers, etc.

The core group members from Bristol gave overwhelming support to the hypothesis that participation in the core group was responsible for an improvement in their self-image. In fact the number of positive responses in this case seems to be directly related to the increased efforts that each of the three people had made to keep the group going. By taking on work that in other communities had been shared by eight to ten people, they seemed to have been rewarded with a greater number of positive experiences.

Rollinsford. Much of the credit for the success of the Rollinsford group must be given to the "chairman" of the group. While responses on the questionnaires indicated that everyone had a part in controlling the direction of the group, it was obvious that the group had given a large share of the tasks to the "chairman." This conclusion was confirmed by the interviews with the ten former participants. The dynamics of this situation were unclear. Did the "chairman" take a major responsibility for the course of the group or did the other participants relinquish that responsibility? The sense of the investigator was that the latter was the case.

A profile of the group's activities when it was functioning shows a range of classes, meetings and experiences that go beyond those of the core groups in Raymond or Kingston. The specific activities ranged from public meetings on a variety of local political issues to the sponsoring of a community newspaper. While the activities sponsored did not approach all of the areas mentioned in question 7 of the questionnaire, the answers by the former core group participants indicated a willingness to include most of those activities in their program. In those few areas that they felt were inappropriate for core group sponsorship, the reason most commonly given was not that they were "too controversial" but that "the group was not expert enough in the area."

Since the end of the group many of the activities have continued in the community. This is indicative of the commitment of the individual core group members to the activities in which they were involved during the existence of the group.

As a result of the great number of commitments that core group members had to other community organizations, there seems to have been a concentrated effort to attract new members into the core group to share the responsibility for the program. The urgency of the situation was explained by one person, "all core group members are busy, a new face meant someone else could drop out." Ultimately this was responsible for the end of the learning group. Too many of the core group members had other community interests and responsibilities that were of a higher priority than the Community Learning Group. The number of new people joining the group was never sufficient to maintain the program over a four year period. Even those who became involved after the initial organizing effort found themselves gradually drawn into a host of other community responsibilities.

Rollinsford core group members were less enthusiastic about the positive influence of the group upon the participating individuals than were the other groups. While they all agreed that it had been positive, only a few cited specific examples. It appears from the interviews that individuals saw the work that they did in the Community Learning Center group as an extension of their normal activities. Therefore it became difficult to identify the positive aspects of their overall community involvement. If the core group had been in operation at the time of the interviews the study might have elicited a greater number of specific comments in this area.

In the preceding portions of chapter four, part two, the investigator has tried to draw some distinctions between the five core group

according to the responses of individual core group members to the questionnaire and interview used for the study. The groups showed a great many more similarities than differences. Left to their own devices the groups, including the one that had ceased, developed, organized, and maintained community education programs that were remarkably similar.

The major differences were in types of activities that might be sponsored by the core groups in the future rather than in the types of activities that had already taken place. This conclusion is particularly significant in regard to the future of the groups and the changing role that some might play in their communities.

The potential of the groups to address issues that have historically not been of concern and to include people from groups that have as yet not been involved, is of vital concern to the investigator. Of equal importance is the potential use of the Community Learning Center process by other groups to address problems that are of unique concern to them. Both of these points are addressed in greater detail in chapter five.

Chapter five also examines the conclusions of the study in the light of past and present human development efforts. More specifically, it considers the relevance of the New Hampshire Community Learning Center Projects to the needs of people at the lower end of the economic spectrum.

C H A P T E R V

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS OF THE DISSERTATION

Summary and Conclusions of the Dissertation

This chapter in the dissertation summarizes the conclusions of the dissertation as they relate to the four hypotheses chosen for study. Drawing upon these conclusions the chapter also provides guidelines for implementation for those educators who wish to adopt or adapt the Community Learning Center approach to community education. The second major topic addressed by this chapter is the relevance of the Community Learning Center philosophy and process to the needs of low income people.

The major bases for the study were the four hypotheses established by the investigator. They were that the five projects selected for study would show (1) a high level of participant control, (2) a wide variety of activities, (3) participation by a wide variety of individuals and (4) a positive effect upon the self-image of the participants.

The Hypothesis relating to control of the community education process by the participants and the positive effect of the process upon the self-image of the participants were substantiated by the study. In both instances all of the respondents indicated that they were in agreement with those positions. The only area in which there was less than a unanimous position was in the degree of support that was given to the positions. Two or three of the people in each case added some qualifications to their answers, e.g., "in most cases, for the most part."

It is equally clear that the results did not support the remaining two hypotheses of the study. Based upon the data it appears that not all of the Learning Center Projects had a wide variety of activities nor did all of them involve a wide range of individuals from the community in the operation of the core group.

Those groups that have sponsored classes and informational sessions on land use planning, landlord-tenant law, consumer law, human potential, and local political issues have transcended the scope of one dimensional program offerings that are so common with most traditional community education programs. On balance, however, it is fair to conclude that all of the groups sponsored a majority of activities that fall into craft and manual skill areas.

It is more difficult to draw a clear conclusion on the issue of a wide variety of persons active in the core group. The Hopkinton core group, from a town with a high income level, has no representation from the neighboring area of Contoocook, originally part of the project. Contoocook has a population that is less affluent than that of Hopkinton. There is no indication that there are people with ranges in income, age or interests in this core group. In other communities, Raymond for instance, there appears to be a wider variety of individuals involved in the core group, particularly in terms of age and community interest.

Based upon the results of the study, where do the New Hampshire Learning Center Projects fit within the field of community education? The major factor of the projects remains the control over the process

that is exercised by the participants. This factor alone separates these projects from the mainstream of community education and from a substantial portion of the efforts in the fields of community organization and community development. The projects are based upon the philosophy that the line between teacher and learner should not be formally defined, that the processes chosen by an individual to improve his skills is one that should be under the control of the learner.

Even in the areas covered by the two hypotheses that were not supported by the results of the study, the Community Learning Center core groups have achieved some of the best results in the field. The achievements of some of the best projects in the traditional community education field. As discussed in chapter 2, the existence of highly trained professionals in positions of leadership within the community school structure, provides for much less input into programmatic decisions by a wide variety of people than one finds in most of the Learning Center groups. When one compares Raymond or Kingston core groups in terms of the variety of people involved in decision making to traditional community education programs, it is evident that there is no structure within the traditional programs that is as effective as the core group.

The second major portion of the study addressed the relevance of the Community Learning Center Projects as a vehicle for meeting the needs of low income people in New Hampshire communities. Consideration was given to two aspects of this concern: (1) how effective is the present Learning Center structure and (2) what changes could be made in the philosophy and practice to increase the potential for

success in dealing with the problems of low income people? Both of these questions are addressed in light of the four hypotheses created for the study.

Controversy exists in the field of services to low income people over the degree of control or involvement that the recipients of services should have over the systems that have been established to meet their needs. Those persons who view the causes of poverty only in terms of lack of resources, tend to support the proposition that trained professionals in the field of social work are in the best position to determine the problems, resources needed and proper delivery systems for assistance to low income people. On the other hand there are those who believe that only through self-initiated action in their own behalf, will people with low income problems develop the skills and resources to solve those problems.

It is apparent that both the philosophy and practice of the Community Learning Center groups is closely aligned with the position of participant involvement in efforts to solve problems. The results from the questionnaires used in the study and the interviews left little doubt that the process used to build community education in a town is one in which the recipients of the service are also those who develop the process of delivery for the service.

It is obvious that there are few people who could be classified as low income in any of the core groups. Whether the range of activities sponsored by the core groups would change as a result of more low income

participation is unclear.

Two schools of thought exist in this area of social science. Some people advocate an integration of people from various income levels to provide an effective mechanism for resolving the problem of poverty in our society. Others maintain that the coalition approach will only serve to dilute the development of skills by low income people, that they must be able to work in a homogeneous group to develop the necessary skills to solve their problems.

The Community Learning Center process appears at this point in time to be neither of the two examples listed above. The attempts to address the problems of low income people have come primarily from individuals in the Learning Center groups who are not part of a low income community. If low income people do not participate or have input into the core group process it is doubtful that the programs, classes and activities will be relevant to their needs.

Evidence of the positive impact that the process has upon core group members has a corollary in the experience of low income people who have been involved in some self-help programs in the past. The most striking examples come from people involved in some of the community organization projects of the War on Poverty in the 1960's. In those instances people were able to support the position that their participation had a positive effect upon their self-image.

When one looks at the four hypotheses posed for the study from the framework of those that are the most important to problem solving for low income people, it is evident that the control of the process

and the necessity of a positive self-image from participation are at the heart of most successful efforts. The Community Learning Center Projects are extremely effective in emphasizing both of these. The necessity of an effort by low income people to have wide participation from a community or to emphasize a wide variety of issues is much less clear.

What changes could be made in the philosophy or practice of the Community Learning Center Projects to increase the potential of the process to assist low income people? Two possibilities exist: (1) design a way by which more low income people would become a part of the local core group, or (2) start the process in a local community with a group which is made up of a majority of low income people.

These actions would raise a number of questions related to the philosophy of the Learning Center Projects. Since the most important aspect of the entire process is the emphasis upon the individual core group member making the important decisions for the program, it would appear to be a violation of the philosophy to attempt to move groups into specific actions to change the ongoing direction of the program.

The Community Learning Center Projects contain within their philosophy the basic elements necessary for meaningful social action by low income people. Whether or not the use of the process by low income people in a particular community would result in the "enrichment of the total community life" envisioned by their founder is not clear. What does appear clear to the investigator is that the Community

Learning Center process formalizes some of the elements of successful self-help efforts by low income people that have been used in the past. Utilizing this process with individuals and groups facing the critical problems of inadequate incomes, inadequate housing, inadequate health care, and inadequate diet is the next step.

Suggestions for Additional Research

Since there is very little research that has been done in the field of participant controlled human development efforts, there are a great variety of areas and concerns that should be investigated further.

Further study of the impact of community education projects such as the Community Learning Centers is becoming an increasing priority, due to the reexamination of its community education philosophy (by the Mott Foundation). The question being raised by the Foundation in the initial phase of the study indicates that substantial attention is being given in the areas of community education in which the New Hampshire Community Learning centers are the strongest, i.e., participant control, role of professionals vs. participants in the process, and the impact of the process upon individual participants. An indication of the perspective of the new Mott Foundation five year plan for Community Education (1977) can be seen in a section of the internal evaluation relating to "Program vs. Process": "The mission of community education, as facilitating involvement by the community in the affairs of the schools and other community based institutions seems missing in many of these program-oriented models." (p. 24)

In the field of community education, there is the need for a study that would compare the two major types of programs: the Mott Community School model and the community based participant controlled model. Difficulties arise in the formulation of a study of this nature due to the lack of agreement on measures by professionals associated with both models. There is continuous debate over the validity of using such measures as number of persons attending activities, impact of the program on individual attitudes of participants and the significance of the activity as defined by its importance to the participants' problems. Another central question that receives different answers for the representatives of the two schools of practice is, "Who should benefit from a community education program? Should it be all of the community or those in a community who are in more need of assistance than others?"

If a system of measurement can be designed which will be acceptable to both groups, then there is the very real possibility of carrying out a study the results of which will be accepted by the two sides. Otherwise research efforts will be considered to be biased by the proponents of the two points of view in the field of community education.

Another facet of the comparison between the Mott Community School model and the community based participant controlled programs that deserve further study is the variation in financial resources that are needed to implement and sustain both types of programs. The emphasis in the Mott model upon certified community school administrators and certified teachers requires substantial financial commitments by a school district, state or federal government. On the other hand, the sharing of skills by most of

the participants that is at the heart of the Community Learning Center program necessitates the expenditure of little money in the development of the program and even less in its operation. An indepth study of the financial resources utilized by both approaches to community education would address one of the primary concerns of school administrators, community education leaders and taxpayers.

A longitudinal study of the Community Learning Center projects in New Hampshire would be of great assistance in determining the future course of the impact of the projects. A study of this nature would begin to answer the question raised by the originator of the projects, (Robby Fried, 1975):

In what light is the Community Learning Center Project to be judged: as the initial phase of a social movement that would embrace all conditions of social injustice both of powerlessness? Or as a rather mild, temporary and isolated experiment in small scale educational innovation which has tried to adorn itself with grandiose sociological and ethical trappings?
(p. 140)

In another three years, more data would be available on the impact of the groups, both in terms of their continued growth, or, as in the case of Rollinsford, the integration of the core group effort into sponsorship by other community groups.

The entire issue of the relevance of the Community Learning Center philosophy and program to an urban environment needs further consideration. Are the characteristics of small rural New England villages and communities that seem to be conducive to the success of the centers found in larger urban areas? It would be important to examine in detail those projects in urban settings that seem to have similar structures

and philosophies to the Community Learning Centers. There are currently a wide variety of human development efforts in urban areas that could be used for comparison such as food co-ops, tenants' rights groups and parent groups organized to influence local educational policies and programs.

The available evidence from the history of Community Action agencies and such self-help experiments as the Woodlawn organization in south Chicago indicate that there may well be a significant number of similarities between certain rural and urban environments to indicate a reasonable chance of success with the program.

Attempts are currently being made to utilize the process in New Hampshire cities. If the transition is successful to a city such as Manchester, New Hampshire (population 95,000), then it is likely that similar efforts could be successful in even larger urban areas. It must be understood that implementation of the Community Learning Center philosophy in an urban setting would be undertaken using small neighborhood groups as a base rather than city-wide groups.

It is also important to study the adaptability of the process for very large numbers of people. Should the philosophy upon which the Community Learning Centers are based be a viable problem solving method for either low income groups or for groups from a variety of income levels in urban settings, it would increase substantially the numbers of persons who could use the process for gaining more control over their own lives.

There is currently very little data available regarding the reasons for the failure of the Community Learning Center philosophy in some com-

mmunities. Two aspects of this failure deserve study: (1) Why do a number of communities indicate a disinterest in the process initially and (2) Why did the process fail in some communities after operating for up to one year? The results of a study of these two points would be instrumental in identifying the settings that would be most favorable for successful implementation of Community Learning Center projects.

Further study should also be made of participation in the process upon the self-image of the participants, particularly in terms of the transference of skills learned or developed in the Community Learning Center process to other concerns of their lives. The nature of this study would call for an indepth look at a relatively small number of participants and would be extremely time consuming. However, the evidence that could be obtained in an effort of this type is necessary to document the full implication of core group participation in the Community Learning Center projects.

Further studies could center around the question, "Does the use of the Community Learning Center philosophy for low income groups provide tangible gains in their economic position within society?" If the answer were yes, then the ramifications of the use of the process would be immense. If the answer were no, then the fears of the organizer (see p. 90) related to the impact of the process might be realized.

Investigator's Recommendations

For those who would attempt to develop community education programs that are similar to the Community Learning Center Projects there are a

number of guidelines that should be kept in mind. Some are relevant to the philosophy upon which a program is built while others relate to the operation of the program.

1. The program belongs to the people in the community, not to the developer or facilitator.
2. Each community is unique. People should be encouraged to develop a program that reflects their own needs and uniqueness rather than adopting the program from another town.
3. The issue of money for teachers, administrators, and rental of space is minor when the concept of sharing of skills is adopted.
4. Each community has within its population the resources to carry out a successful community education program.
5. Each person in the core group has the potential to share some skill with other people.
6. The role of the facilitator must be carried out by someone who is sensitive to the need to support people in developing a process to reach their goals. If one is unsure of the degree of direction to give, it is best to err on the side of giving a little direction rather than too much.
7. Some form of network that allows existing core groups to share ideas is helpful.

8. Assistance to ongoing core groups must be carried out with the same sensitivity to the needs of participating individuals as is shown in the early developmental process.
9. The entire Community Learning Center concept rests upon the belief that (1) people have the ability to make decisions for their own benefit, and (2) people have the right to develop skills which will allow them to gain some measure of control over their future.

The most important question intertwined throughout the entire field of community education is, "What groups or collection of individuals should be making use of the community education process? Should it be those who would use the process for whatever goals they have in mind, or should the process be developed to meet the needs of those in society with the fewest resources?"

It is the belief of the investigator that any process that professes to meet the needs of people in society, should do so in a way that maximizes the accessibility to that process of those who are most in need of its assistance. In reference to the New Hampshire Community Learning Center Projects, one may ask, "Is it more important for a local community education core group to attempt to meet the needs of those individuals in a rural community who cannot provide an adequate diet for their children or those whose leisure time activities do not include the possibility of ceramics' classes? Should the project address the problem of a family with a handicapped child who is not being provided an adequate educational program by the state or local community or the family whose

children are not being given an adequate number of field trips by the local school?"

Can community education programs meet the needs of those who are most in need of help? Technically, the process that has been developed in New Hampshire through the Community Learning Centers seems suited to that end. A number of changes will have to be made in both attitudes and funding priorities before community education could have a substantial impact upon the needs of those most in need in our society.

The history of governmental funding for self-help programs for low income people in this country does not provide a positive picture for further action in this area. Whenever it has become apparent to local, state and federal government officials that government funds are being used to encourage low income people to make substantial gains in influence or resources, the governmental processes have been employed to cut or substantially reduce the resources being provided in that area. Should community education become visible enough to begin to address the issues of self-help for low income people then the forces that have preserved the status quo in the past will no doubt come into play again.

Federal funding for community education was initiated with the Community Schools Act of 1972. Under this legislation, funding has been provided to both statewide and local community education projects. It is still too early to tell which direction in terms of total dollars and philosophy this funding will take. When looking at the pattern of funding during the past two years, there is some reason for optimism. Several projects have been supported whose principle philosophy has been

one of working with communities to define problems, helping those communities to develop strategies to address the problems and implementing solutions to the problems that rest upon the initiative and control of the community.

An even more hopeful sign is the current reassessment of community education goals being carried out by the Mott Foundation. Much to the surprise of those in the field of community education who are outside the Mott sphere, the initial evaluation of Mott community education programs indicates a questioning of the assumptions that have served as principles of the Foundation's long history of funding for community education in the United States.

Should the community education funding patterns of the Mott Foundation change in some of the directions indicated by the recent evaluation of the Mott Community School model, then there may well be the potential for a substantial change in the types of community education programs considered acceptable. This might open up another avenue of support for community education programs that have the potential for becoming major forces for change in our society.

If a major change in attitude by the funding sources in community education becomes more pronounced, it would result in the attraction to the field of community education of a variety of people who would see this medium as a possible way to effect substantial change within society. At this point, there are a great number of people who, having been involved in activist movements in the past, would find the community education field one of the few viable ways left to carry out some of the

visions that a democratic society holds out to its citizenship.

At the same time this movement away from the community school model of community education would tend to limit or at least reduce the influence of academic institutions in the field of community education. Some of the responsibility for the longevity of the traditional community school program must be laid at the doors of the academic institutions who have felt more comfortable training community educators to present solutions to community problems, than they have in training community educators to work with communities to solve their own problems.

If community educators wish to address the needs of those who have limited access to the tools necessary for some minimal level of existence in our society, then they will undoubtedly encounter the limits that similar movements have faced before: a finite level of power, influence and economic resources within society. To attempt to increase the share of those resources for any one group means a decrease of similar proportions to others. It is a frustrating and quite often failure oriented task to embark on such a course, but to do otherwise is to accept a way of life which condemns a substantial number of people in this country to live without the common decencies of good health, adequate shelter, adequate education or adequate employment. If community educators could begin to address these issues and further, provide some evidence of success, they would have fulfilled not only much of their original purpose, but would have also begun to narrow the gap between the moral principles that our society holds out to people and the reality of the lives with which they are faced.

The Community Learning Center Projects in New Hampshire provide concrete examples of the potential for community education to address some of the important problems in our society. They do not in themselves provide the answers, but give the philosophy from which the solutions may grow. By combining these programs with the people in the community education field who are committed to the philosophy upon which they are based, there is the very real possibility for a movement on the national level which will be much clearer in purpose, more powerful in impact, and more meaningful to the lives of the participants than that which now exists.

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

1. Has the Community Learning Center Project been of help to you in any way? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, could you give some specific examples?

If no, why do you feel it was not helpful?

2. In what ways do you see your participation in the Community Learning Center core group as benefiting you in the future?

3. Who makes the important decisions for the Community Learning Center core group in your community?

4. What role did the group leader, (organizer from outside the community), play in decision making in your core group?

_____ Made decisions for the group _____ trained us to run our own meetings

_____ Held the group together _____ got group started then played a facilitating role

5. Do you feel that you were in any way limited in your participation in the decision making in your core group? Yes _____ No _____

6. What process is used by the core group to make decisions?
 Group discussion _____, voting _____, consensus _____,
 other (please specify) _____

7. A variety of community activities are listed below. I would like to learn how appropriate or inappropriate you feel each activity is, regardless of whether or not your core group sponsored it. Please circle the number that most closely expresses your feeling of the appropriateness of the activity for core group involvement in your community.

	not appropriate			very appropriate	
a. Providing craft and hobby instruction	1	2	3	4	5
b. Providing recreational activities	1	2	3	4	5
c. Assisting persons to better understand their rights under state law, e.g., state welfare benefits	1	2	3	4	5
d. Assisting persons to better understand their rights under local regulations, e.g., town welfare benefits	1	2	3	4	5
e. Organizing people in support of state wide environmental concerns such as nuclear power	1	2	3	4	5
f. Organizing people around local environmental concerns, e.g., inadequate sewage systems, recycling, beautification, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
g. Participating in the development of employment opportunities such as helping to bring new businesses to town	1	2	3	4	5

17. Does the Community Learning Center Project in your community enable people to gain some control over their own education? Yes _____ No _____
18. Are there individuals or groups in your community who would benefit from the Community Learning Center activities but are not now involved? Yes _____ No _____

Please list any groups that come to mind such as senior citizens, low income groups, teenagers, men, women, blue collar workers, white collar workers, etc.

19. Which part of the Community Learning Center group has been the most important to you? Core group participation _____
Student _____ Teacher _____
20. Has participation in the Community Learning Center core group been helpful to you in developing and using new skills? If this has happened to you, could you describe the skills?
21. Has participation in the Community Learning Center core group been helpful to you in developing and using skills that you knew you possessed but had not been able to use? If this has happened to you, could you describe the skills?
22. Please include any comments about the Community Learning Center process that you feel would be helpful to future efforts in New Hampshire.

APPENDIX B

A detailed map of New Hampshire showing its 103 counties. The map is oriented with North at the top. Major cities and towns are labeled within their respective county boundaries. The state's irregular coastline is clearly visible on the left and bottom edges. The map is a black and white line drawing with county names in all caps.

